

A Few Odd Notes on Lycaenids, etc.

By J. W. H. HARRISON, B.Sc., F.E.S.

On July 14th I was out after *Polyommatus astrarche*, but, as it became dull, I spent the remainder of the day in examining the numberless *P. icarus*, which were resting on the grass and rush heads, for aberrations. I only took two or three worthy of mention. The first was a male specimen of ab. *icarinus*, Scrib. This is the first specimen of this form I have taken; it is now in the possession of Mr. G. B. Walsh of Hull. Not far from this specimen I got a dwarf form, also a male, expanding only 22mm. This contrasted greatly with some giant *P. astrarche* I had taken earlier in the day with a wing expanse of 35mm. Several of the female examples I took, in addition to the inner half of the fringes above being grey, possessed a dark brown or almost black line, on the underside running parallel to the margin and bisecting the fringes. I looked in vain for male examples of this form. Just as I was leaving, I got a remarkable form of the female; it was quite symmetrically marked. The forewings beneath possessed the discal scar, but the two basal ocelli, or rather their remains, were moved up to the scar, and, together with the black centre of the scar, and the remains of the subterminal row of ocelli, which were also moved up to the scar, formed a small black T. The hindwings only possessed a confused mark in the centre; I take this to be a rather unusual form of ab. *persica*. As the insect was a female, I resolved to try for ova, and I was successful; I allowed it to lay about two dozen, and then killed and set it.

It is rather curious how brightly coloured the female blues on the coast are, compared with the dingy brown specimens found inland.

As I noted before, *Cupido minima* reappeared in its inland localities in Durham and Northumberland last year in some abundance after being unobserved for several years. This year, a close search for the insect and also for ova, which were readily found last year, ended in absolute failure, although the butterfly was observed sparingly in a new locality near South Shields.

Polyommatus astrarche and its aberrations were very abundant this year in all its known haunts. I should think its numbers were about six times that of a normal year. This is the more extraordinary, as a friend and myself went for larvæ at the end of April, and, except for a single larva I obtained, and gave to my brother for a correspondent, not one was visible. In an ordinary season, between two and three dozen larvæ has been the usual take. What was still more remarkable, was the absence of any indication of the larvæ feeding. My friend, Mr. Johnson, of Gateshead, before becoming aware of our non-success, also made a search, and also with a total catch of one. The other friends of mine, who were with him, took none. I fancy the larvæ fed up very early in the spring, or took advantage of the open winter, and fed up then. Or, perhaps, with the hereditary tendency to double-broodedness, the larvæ fed up last year in the warm autumn we had, and remained as pupæ all the time. A slight confirmation of one or other of these surmises, I see in the fact that, in spite of the cold June, the insect was out about ten days earlier this year than in 1904.

I have rather a curious incident to relate regarding *Rumicia phlaeas*. During the Christmas holidays I had occasion to send a consignment